

# **Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan**

**January 2000**

**C**ultural Heritage Tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources.

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***The Steering Committee would like to thank the more than 600 individuals across the state who provided input***

*for this strategic plan by attending one of the regional millennium forums during the summer of 1999 and the 20 individuals who also attended a follow-up focus group meeting.*

## **PREFACE**

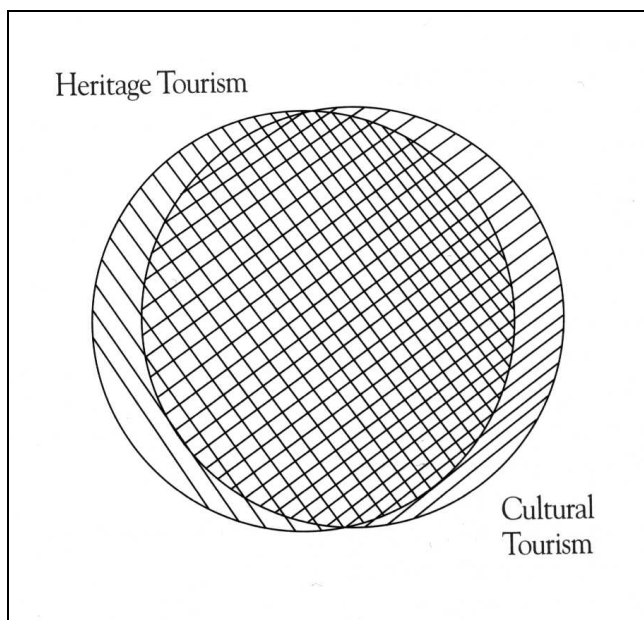
### ***Definition of Cultural Heritage Tourism***

The National Trust's Heritage Tourism Program defines cultural heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources." Effective cultural heritage tourism programs build bridges between tourism, historic preservation, museums, the arts, the humanities, natural resources and other related interests to form strong partnerships to preserve, enhance, promote and manage irreplaceable cultural, historic and natural resources.

### ***Heritage vs. Cultural Tourism***

There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the similarities and differences between "heritage tourism" and "cultural tourism." There is no question that the areas of overlap far exceed the differences. Most important, the heritage visitor and the cultural visitor are quite often one and the same, and thus it makes sense to work together to create appealing and well-rounded cultural heritage visitor experiences.

An informal survey of programs across the country reveals that "heritage" programs are more often found outside metropolitan areas while "cultural" programs are more often found in urban settings. Preservation groups are more likely to describe "heritage tourism" programs, while museum and arts groups are more likely to refer to "cultural tourism" programs, though the content is often quite similar. Heritage tourism programs are often associated with history and the past, and yet, modern culture often has roots in the past. Furthermore, an enlightened preservationist is able to see the culture of today as the heritage of tomorrow.



*Heritage and cultural visitors  
are often one and the same*

The primary difference between the two is that heritage tourism is “place” based. Heritage tourism programs create a sense of place rooted in the local landscape, architecture, people, artifacts, traditions and stories that make a particular place unique. Cultural tourism programs celebrate the same kinds of experiences, though with less emphasis on place. Thus viewing the work of a great master artist in his home and studio is a heritage tourism experience, while viewing those very same pieces of art in a traveling exhibition is a cultural tourism experience. The content is the same while the context is different.

This distinction helps to clarify why preservationists refer to “heritage tourism” while museums and the arts use the term “cultural tourism.” Preservation tends to address the built environment and cultural landscapes, and preservationists place a high value on maintaining the original context. On the other hand, museums and the arts are more likely to deal with collections and performances that can be transported and shared with other communities. As large metropolitan areas have the ability to finance such visiting collections and performances, it is not surprising that the term “cultural tourism” is more often used in urban areas.

The term “cultural heritage tourism” has been used to describe programs that encompass all the attributes of both cultural and heritage tourism. This term provides an effective umbrella to bring a broader range of potential partners together to provide a more comprehensive and appealing tourism product.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Need for a Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan***

Kentucky’s 1994 Economic Development Master Plan clearly identifies the need for a cultural heritage tourism strategic plan. Tactic 5.3.1 states that Kentucky should ***“Develop and implement a plan to maximize the use of state, federal and private funds for programs to increase the economic and tourism development impact of local and regional cultural, historical and natural assets.”*** The Economic Development Master Plan and the 1995 Kentucky Tourism Development Master Plan both include numerous references to specific activities that will enhance and promote Kentucky’s cultural heritage tourism offerings. This strategic plan builds upon the specific recommendations included in these two plans to create a strategic action plan to guide and coordinate cultural heritage tourism activities in Kentucky over the next three to five years.

Tourism is a major source of economic development for Kentucky. Tourism is currently the third largest revenue generator behind agriculture and the automotive industry, and tourism is the second largest employer in the Commonwealth. In 1995, traveler spending in Kentucky was estimated at \$7.29 billion (including both in and out of state travelers). This spending directly or indirectly accounted for over 150,000 jobs (*Source: Travel Industry World Yearbook/The Big Picture 1997-1998*).

Cultural heritage tourism is especially appealing as it is a low impact and sustainable industry. If managed correctly, a cultural heritage tourism program also helps to preserve unique aspects of local communities and improve the quality of life for residents as well as providing appealing visitor experiences.

It is no surprise that cultural heritage tourism appears in Kentucky's Economic Development Master Plan and Tourism Development Master Plan. The rich history and enticing natural resources of Kentucky have always had a strong appeal for Kentucky's visitors. In fact, according to a 1993 Kentucky Department of Travel survey, visitors in Kentucky cite historic sites as the #1 consideration when making vacation decisions. Opportunities abound to showcase Kentucky's Civil War heritage, crafts heritage as well as industries such as coal mining and millworking. A number of African American sites are ripe for further development, and Kentucky can claim a number of famous individuals such as Daniel Boone, Abraham Lincoln, Mohammed Ali, Henry Clay, and Lewis & Clark. Natural areas such as the Cumberland Gap figure prominently into the history of this country.

Kentucky's Department of Travel recognized the potential of heritage tourism in 1992 when a new full-time Heritage Tourism Specialist position was created. In addition, numerous other state agencies and local groups in Kentucky are actively working on various aspects of cultural and/or heritage tourism. The recent opening of the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort represents a considerable investment in sharing Kentucky's heritage with visitors, and the proposed Appalachian/Kentucky Gateway Artisans Center in Berea offers an opportunity to create a state-of-the-art facility to showcase Kentucky's extensive craft heritage and encourage additional travel to experience Kentucky's cultural heritage.

Strong support for cultural heritage tourism exists at both the state and the local level in Kentucky. The creation of this plan has the full support of the Tourism Development and the Education, Arts & Humanities Cabinets, and the state agencies within both cabinets have a strong track record of working together cooperatively. In addition, organizations at the local level have expressed a strong interest in cultural heritage tourism.

At the national level, cultural heritage tourism is currently riding a wave of popularity. Visitors are actively seeking cultural and heritage travel experiences, and tourism organizations are creating dynamic new cultural heritage tourism products to respond to this need. The popularity of cultural heritage tourism and the fact that other surrounding states are also currently seeking to capture a greater share of this attractive target market lends a sense of urgency to the full development of Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program.

In short, the time is right to create and implement a strategic plan that identifies a unified vision for cultural heritage tourism in Kentucky and outlines the specific actions needed to move Kentucky towards that desired future. Kentucky has a strong cultural heritage product, and visitors are increasingly seeking out these kinds of experiences as a part of their travel plans. This plan will guide Kentucky in enhancing their existing cultural heritage offerings,

coordinating efforts to eliminate duplication and build stronger partnerships, and market Kentucky's cultural heritage to capture a greater share of the cultural heritage tourism market.

### ***Strategic Planning Process***

Under the leadership of the Kentucky Department of Travel, a steering committee was formed in April of 1999 to launch the strategic planning effort. This strategic planning steering committee included key representatives from a variety of agencies in both the Kentucky Tourism Development Cabinet and the Kentucky Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet. Recognizing the potential of cultural heritage tourism, this group prepared a request for proposals and contracted with the Heritage Tourism Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to assist the state in preparing the strategic plan. The National Trust has extensive experience in developing cultural heritage tourism programs at the state level. In the past decade, the National Trust's Heritage Tourism Program has helped to develop state programs in Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin. The National Trust's planning team also included HandMade in America, a North Carolina-based organization that has served as a national model for the promotion of local arts and crafts, and the HTC Group, a consulting firm with extensive heritage tourism experience and a strong working knowledge of tourism in the South.

Several methods were used to gather information to generate a strong foundation for the strategic plan, including meetings and interviews with the steering committee and public forums designed to invite public input into the plan. The public forums were attended by over 600 individuals representing a range of local interests from across the state.

During the initial steering committee meeting, the following desired results for the plan were articulated by the steering committee:

#### **Desired Results for Kentucky Cultural Heritage Strategic Plan**

- 1) To design an organizational structure and strategies to coordinate cultural heritage tourism efforts at the state and local level
- 2) To develop an awareness of Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism potential amongst residents and elected officials
- 3) To identify existing and potential resources for cultural heritage tourism in Kentucky
- 4) To ensure that Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism offerings are developed in accordance with standards of authenticity and quality
- 5) To identify tourism development strategies to enhance Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism potential
- 6) To identify marketing strategies to promote Kentucky's unique cultural heritage tourism offerings effectively.
- 7) To maximize the economic impact potential of cultural heritage tourism in Kentucky and ensure that the economic impact is sustainable.
- 8) To prioritize activities and create a realistic implementation plan that is "do-able."

The Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet had already scheduled five day-long "Millennium Forums" to be held across the state in May, June and July of 1999. These forums became a key component of the strategic planning process, serving as a mechanism to reach out to local communities to identify issues, recommended actions and desired results. The Millennium Forums were kicked off by a statewide Kentucky Tourism Council Symposium on cultural heritage tourism in Owensboro on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. More than 500 registrants attended the Millennium Forums, which were held in Madisonville (May 27<sup>th</sup>), Somerset (June 9<sup>th</sup>), Frankfort (June 16<sup>th</sup>), Highland Heights (July 20<sup>th</sup>) and Prestonsburg (July 29<sup>th</sup>).

The forums were used both as educational seminars and as a method of gathering information about local and regional issues. Case studies were presented at each forum: downtown Paducah's revitalization efforts, Mill Springs Civil War Battlefield, Frankfort Signage Program, Underground Railroad Initiative, and the Route 23 Corridor Project. Participants were asked to express their desires for the strategic plan and for state assistance in cultural heritage tourism as well as to discuss the issues they are concerned about, the actions they are taking and would like to take to address those issues, and the desired results they would like to see in the future from their efforts and those of the state.

Forum participants had many suggestions for cultural heritage tourism. Although each forum had information presented unique to the geographic region, there were many commonalities.

Five major themes emerged from the forums, including the need for:

1. Education and increased awareness about the culture and heritage of the Commonwealth and about the potential impact of cultural heritage tourism is needed at all levels, from school children to legislators, and is critical to development efforts.
2. Communication and networking, partnerships and collaborations must be enhanced among cultural organizations, heritage organizations, tourism organizations, community organizations, state and regional agencies, and economic development entities for cultural heritage tourism efforts to succeed.
3. A focused, positive image and identity for Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism sites, at both the state and regional level, will help restore community pride and encourage additional visitation to sites by both residents and visitors.
4. Preservation of rural communities, craft traditions and historic buildings; conservation of green space and agricultural lands; and clean-up of the environment will improve the state's image and aid in protecting and further developing cultural heritage tourism sites.

5. Additional resources such as funding and technical assistance, particularly provided at the regional level, for cultural heritage tourism programs and projects could help communities develop their rich histories and resources into cultural heritage tourism products to attract more tourists, create new businesses and new jobs, and generate more local tax dollars.

Some of the concerns mentioned at the forums—the lack of zoning, the need for additional recreation-related infrastructure, downtown revitalization issues, and other types of tourism—are also addressed in other plans such as the tourism development master plan. This strategic plan provides a structure that requires planning to address these issues before receiving substantial tourism development support through the state's cultural heritage tourism program. In addition, everyone involved in Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program should stay abreast of developments and issues in these areas and lend support to efforts that will enhance cultural heritage tourism.

In August of 1999, all of the community input gathered at each forum was presented to a focus group consisting of 20 attendees from the regional millennium forums. In addition, the community input was presented to the strategic planning steering committee along with a supporting detailed written report. Each report included a complete copy of all the forum handouts, summary reports including a listing of the themes that emerged from each forum, all flip chart notes from the work of each small group at each forum, and lists of pre-registered attendees. This grassroots input in the planning process was used by the planning team as the basis for the goals and strategies developed.

### ***Planning Team Assumptions***

This plan is based on several assumptions about what is required for a successful cultural heritage tourism program in Kentucky.

**First**, cultural heritage tourism must begin at the grassroots level. This plan outlines a support structure that will nurture local efforts and encourage grassroots initiatives.

**Second**, authenticity and quality are essential ingredients for success. A lack of authenticity will detract from Kentucky's credibility. Quality must permeate the tour products themselves as well as the infrastructure, hospitality and marketing efforts surrounding the tour products.

**Third**, not all tourism activities must (or should be) cultural heritage tourism. Likewise, not all historic resources are preserved for tourism purposes. For those historic resources where tourism is appropriate, issues of accessibility and the visitor experience must be considered in addition to preservation issues.



The **fourth** and final assumption is that Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program must generate sustainable local tourism programs that have a measurable economic and social impact.

Furthermore, the plan incorporates the five principles and four steps for successful and sustainable heritage tourism developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. These principles and steps, developed almost a decade ago, have stood the test of time and have served as the basis for successful programs across the United States and abroad.

**THE NATIONAL TRUST'S FIVE PRINCIPLES OF HERITAGE TOURISM**

- 1) Focus on authenticity and high quality
- 2) Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources
- 3) Make sites come alive
- 4) Find the fit between community values and tourism
- 5) Collaborate

**THE NATIONAL TRUST'S FOUR STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED IN HERITAGE TOURISM**

**1) Assess the Potential** *Evaluate what your community has to offer in attractions, visitor services, organizational capabilities, ability to protect resources, and marketing.*

**2) Plan and Organize**

*Make good use of the human and financial resources that are available to you. They are the keys that open the doors to sustainable heritage tourism. Set priorities and measurable goals.*

**3) Prepare for Visitors; Protect and Manage your Resources**

*Look to the future as well as to the present. Be sure that the choices you make now improve your community for the long term.*

**4) Market for Success**

*Develop a multi-year, many-tiered marketing plan that targets your market. Look for partners in local, regional, state or national groups.*

***How will this plan be used?***

This strategic plan will serve as the blueprint to guide Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program over the next three to five years. The plan will provide guidelines for a program that will coordinate cultural heritage tourism efforts at both the state and local level. The organizational structure outlined in the plan provides a framework that creates communication and collaboration at the state level as well as fostering grassroots initiative through a multi-tiered

support system that rewards progress and partnerships at the local level.

#### **SITUATION ASSESSMENT**

A situation assessment was conducted by the National Trust planning team to determine current and future trends in tourism and cultural heritage tourism. Situation assessments point out opportunities on which to capitalize and logically apply scarce resources for "the biggest bang for the buck." The trends outlined below are important to the success of Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism efforts and influenced the work of the planning team in development of goals and strategies.

#### ***National Interest in Cultural Heritage Tourism***

The appeal of cultural heritage tourism for travelers in the U.S. has been recognized and researched by leading national tourism organizations. According to a 1997 TravelScope® study by the Travel Industry Association of America, cultural heritage visitors are an extremely attractive target market because they stay longer, spend more money, and are more respectful of local resources. Specifically, this study indicated that visitors to historic and cultural attractions spend, on average, \$615 per trip compared to \$425 for all U.S. travelers, and they stay an average of 4.7 nights away from home as compared to 3.3 nights for all other travelers. Cultural heritage travelers are also more likely to stay at a hotel, motel or bed & breakfast (56% as compared to 42% for all other travelers) and more likely to shop while traveling (45% as compared to 33%). Travelers to cultural and historic sites and events are more than twice as likely to take a group tour than the average U.S. traveler (7% as compared to 3%). Cultural heritage travelers are more likely to travel outside their region of residence, and are also more likely to participate in multiple activities, particularly visits to national and state parks. This same study found that one-third of U.S. adults (65.9 million) took a trip in 1996 that included visiting a historic site or museum, attending a festival or cultural event, or both.

Other studies have confirmed these findings and reinforced the conclusion that visiting historic sites and cultural attractions is also a popular travel activity for U.S. travelers. A 1998 Better Homes & Gardens/Meredith Magazines family travel study found that visiting historic sites topped the list for family vacation plans, marking a steady increase in the popularity of historic sites since 1994, and the first time that this annual study found historic sites to be more popular than oceans and beaches. As other states recognize the appeal and the potential of cultural heritage tourism, it is all the more important for Kentucky to plan for ways to maximize the state's potential in this area.

In addition to the economic benefits of cultural heritage tourism, a well-managed cultural heritage tourism program also improves the quality of life for residents and builds community pride. Cultural heritage tourism can galvanize local support for important historic preservation projects and encourage the preservation of traditional crafts or local ways of life that might otherwise be lost forever.

#### ***Kentucky Visitor Profile***

According to the Kentucky Department of Travel, the majority of visitors are from the Commonwealth. The contiguous states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Tennessee contribute the largest number of in-bound visitors, in priority order. Most visitors arrive by car and are within a two to four hour drive of their homes. Many of the visitors traveling from these states drive from north to south on Kentucky's interstate highways. The primary origin cities for visitors to Kentucky include Indianapolis, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Columbus, Evansville and Detroit. These markets confirm the research data reporting that 80% of Kentucky's visitors travel less than 500 miles on their vacation. Travelers to Kentucky are also more likely to have experienced small towns and villages, landmarks and historic sites, rural farming areas, lakes and rivers, a national or state park, wilderness areas and/or scenic byways during their trip.

During 1997, Kentucky hosted 648,000 international visitors, including Canadian guests. More than three-quarters (84%) visited the state for vacation. In a profile of 1997 overseas visitors (excluding Canada) prepared by CIC Research for Travel South USA, 63.2% toured the countryside, 61% of all pleasure visitors visited historical places, 93% went shopping and 84.5% ate in restaurants. Average expenditure for pleasure overseas visitors to Kentucky was \$453 for gifts, \$160 for entertainment, \$193 for transportation, \$234 for lodging, and \$340 for food.

### ***Current National Visitation Trends***

While the primary target market for Kentucky includes adults between the age of 25-49 with incomes of \$35-75,000, states cannot ignore the largest potential market for cultural heritage tourism. Over the next 3-5 years, the children of baby boomers will become the largest U.S. population group and the *fastest growing major market in the travel industry*. The Student and Youth Travel Association of North America (SYTA) reports that K-12 enrollment increased 14.4% in 1996 to 51.4 million in the U.S. while young adults age 18-24 declined 17.7% in 1995 to 25 million. In 2008 K-12 will grow only 5.6% to 54.3 million while the young adult market will soar to 28.9%—an increase of 15.6%.

According to SYTA, these "Echo Boomers" will travel more than their affluent parents. In addition, these students have great discretionary income for travel and incidentals. Tour operators report 20-30% annual increases in sales of student travel over the past decade. Why? Baby boomers and the WWII generation are willing to spend more money on their children and grandchildren.

In addition, student and youth tours desire "educational travel" experiences for the K-12 market. Specific activities include visits to historic sites, museums, language practice, theater, cultural exposure and government studies. A key to attracting—and hosting—this niche market is to provide education, entertainment, or both.

Promoting the "experience" rather than the destination or activity is the new marketing strategy for tourism today. According to Peter Greenberg, travel correspondent for NBC Today Show, "Travelers are looking for experiential oneness. They want to brag to their neighbors or co-workers about what

they did while on vacation, not just where they went.'" Al Nucifora, an Atlanta-based marketing consultant, says today traveler "no longer just views a vacation as 'relief from labor,' but as a need for a positive and enriching experience.'" Nucifora says "the previous generation was content to view the dolphins at a theme park; today's traveler wants the experience of swimming with them." For cultural heritage tourism, this desire translates into the need for capturing and engaging the visitor's attention through interactive exhibits, role-playing and immersion of the senses - smell, touch, taste, sound and sight - to create a holistic, valued experience.

Perhaps one of the most significant reasons to focus on the student/youth market is that while this market is our adult traveler of tomorrow, these individuals are also the preservationists of the future. If children are not taught to value Kentucky history, they will not endow or support cultural heritage tourism efforts of the future. This could include supporting the restoration of a historic site the preservation of open space or even the development of a new museum. What children are taught to value through education and travel is reflected in their attitudes and activities as adults.

***What cultural heritage tourism attractions does Kentucky have to offer?***

Although bourbon and bluegrass are universally recognized as Kentucky's tourism trademarks, the fifteenth state offers many other distinct heritage and cultural aspects. From the Indian Mounds to prehistoric salt licks to the explorations of Daniel Boone to Abraham Lincoln's birthplace to Civil War Battlefields—visitors can learn about Kentucky's history. Grist mills, iron furnaces and coal mines are reminders of past industries and economies. Shaker hymns, authors, crafts, country music and dances reflect a unique Southern Appalachian culture. All of these provide the foundation for building a cultural heritage tourism program.

A 1995 publication by the Kentucky Department of Travel Development provided eleven unique tours reflecting Kentucky's distinct heritage. These theme tours included Kentucky crafts, small towns, scenic byways, African-American history, genealogy, civil war, capital city, Western Kentucky, Lincoln and Daniel Boone Trails and even ghost tours. Two trails—the Craft Trail and the Civil War Trail represent themes which are more fully developed as heritage trails reflecting not only historic sites but educational opportunities, descriptive marketing materials, and included in the craft tours are excellent visitor amenities for shopping and dining. Currently, these trails are being enhanced. The Civil War Trail is emphasizing the role of Kentuckians in the Civil War and has included the underground railroad to reflect the African-American role in the war. With the addition of the Appalachian/Kentucky Gateway Artisans Center in Berea and the craft production program at the Kentucky Technical College of Arts and

Crafts and the Kentucky Appalachian Arts Center in Hindman, new craft educational opportunities for the visitor will be offered.

Urban cultural heritage experiences can be expanded in the mansion tours of Lexington, Frankfort and Louisville. Joint learning weekends on home restoration, architectural craft, antiques and gardens could be offered. Chautauqua performances and genealogy seminars could provide entertainment at selected mansions and appropriate historic times. Lodging in historic houses, typical meals, literature and music of the historic period could be offered. University and community college continuing education and elder hostel courses could integrate these programs into their curriculum.

### ***Potential Cultural Heritage Tourism Programs in Kentucky***

Potential cultural heritage tourism programs include trails under development such as Corridor 23 and new themes which emerged from input at the Millennium Forums. Currently, Corridor 23 has received the most attention and work as an emerging heritage corridor with the formation of a regional corridor association and a cultural inventory recently completed by the Kentucky Arts Council. While an emphasis has been placed on the location of birthplaces of country music stars along Highway 23 the inventory suggests that the region could be expanded into a Kentucky Folkways Corridor. This could depict a sense of place, rural countryside events, homes and museums, country stores, traditional music venues, food, country fairs and festivals, "old time" radio shows, craft and music instrument makers.

The development of new sites, themes, trails and heritage areas could emerge from the input at the millennium forums and from local communities as they gain knowledge about cultural heritage tourism programs. Each local program or product could include the creation of a cultural heritage tourism organization and staffing; a system of interpretation and training for identified sites and local travel and tourism organizations; a method of developing partnerships and collaborations; a research, inventory and business plan process for each product; and a quality control system to ensure authenticity and educational experiences.

New cultural heritage products could include a "Ribbons of Commerce" Trail on the Ohio River covering a large geographic portion of the state. Waterfront developments in cities and towns of Covington, Louisville, Newport, Owensboro, Henderson, Paducah and Maysville could be featured. Other activities could include the history, construction and architecture of the locks, dams and levees of the river system, and the steamboat stops and race events. Environmental connections to the natural river location of marshes, stream banks, waterfowl and fish habitats could be included.

Kentucky's coal heritage received the most comment from forum participants. A coal heritage area could be extended from Eastern Kentucky into Central Kentucky involving many locations and potential partnerships. Sites could include Sterns at the Big South Fork National Recreation Area, Benham with the Coal Museum and Old Schoolhouse Inn, Duncan Cultural Arts Center, Union County, Muhlenberg County Museum, the Bethel Coal Camp, company towns and working mines. Interpretation of mining and union influence could come from music, literature, documentary films and drama about the region. Places like Appalshop, Hindman Settlement School and Cumberland College could provide authentic sources of interpretive materials.

Before launching any development project, Kentucky must research other similar cultural heritage tourism programs in surrounding states and across the nation. As thematic programs are created, Kentucky's product should showcase unique aspects of their heritage. For instance, West Virginia has already initiated a coal heritage program. To establish the Kentucky coal heritage area as a unique educational experience, organizers should seek out new ways to interpret their history or design interactive programming for new audiences such as families.

## **PROPOSED KENTUCKY CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM**

### **MISSION, GOALS AND ACTIONS**

This first ever Kentucky cultural heritage tourism strategic plan outlines an organizational structure and program elements that will dramatically increase the impact of cultural heritage tourism in Kentucky. It offers an incentive program that encourages and rewards local initiative and ensures that the investment of state resources will be leveraged many times over. It offers a niche market opportunity that will help position Kentucky as a leader in cultural heritage tourism and marketing strategies. Taken together, these goals and actions create a Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Program that is state-wide, comprehensive, and grassroots focused.

#### **Mission**

To foster authentic Kentucky experiences that attract and engage visitors and stimulate local economies through the preservation, development, enhancement and promotion of the Commonwealth's cultural, historic, and natural attractions.

### **Goal 1—Create a sustainable interagency organizational structure for cultural heritage tourism in Kentucky.**

The creation of an organizational structure for Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program that encourages grassroots initiative, promotes partnerships between the Tourism Development, Education, Arts and Humanities, and Economic Development Cabinets and fosters public-private partnerships will be essential to ensure collaboration at both the state and local level.

**Action 1.1 Form an executive steering committee.** Executive committee members will include the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator of the Kentucky Department of Travel, the Deputy Secretary of the Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet, the Executive Director of the Heritage Council, the Executive Director of the Arts Council, a representative from the Economic Development Cabinet and the secretaries from the Tourism Development Cabinet, the Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet and the Economic Development Cabinet. The primary charge of the executive steering committee will be to secure sources of funding for the cultural heritage tourism program.

**Task 1.1.1** Prepare a funding proposal for the cultural heritage tourism program to take before the legislature in January of 2000 and again for renewal in 2002. The proposal should demonstrate the need for and the projected impact of the proposed Cultural Heritage Tourism Program. To increase the appeal of the proposal, consider leveraging the public investment with the promise of matching private dollars.

**Task 1.1.2** Identify potential sources of private dollars and approach potential private sponsors with funding and sponsorship proposals. Seek funding from Kentucky-based corporations such as Toyota USA and Corvette as well as regional endowments including BellSouth, Cox Communications, Gannett Foundation and the Coca-Cola Foundation. In the spirit of public private partnership, use private dollars as a lure to increase the appeal of funding proposals to the legislature. For example, ask the legislature to match private donations up to an agreed upon funding ceiling of \$1 million to fund programs such as a revolving loan fund, an incubator/cultural heritage tourism entrepreneur program; the blue ribbon award program, or a cultural heritage tourism marketing co-op.

**Task 1.1.3** Seek out creative funding opportunities to provide additional sources of income for Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program as needed. For example:

- \* License plate donations (such as the programs in California and Indiana)
- \* Product marketing and licensing programs (such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Civil War Trust)
- \* "Shopping" catalogues or web sites in partnership with American Express or VISA
- \* "Cultural Kentucky" promotions in partnership with American Express (such as the successful "Cultural Chicago" partnership and the award-winning Missouri partnership)
- \* Gift packages of Makers Mark Chocolates in a Shaker box for special corporate gifts, especially Kentucky companies, to give at holidays or derby parties where part of the proceeds go to support the preservation of historic sites.
- \* Song royalties (perhaps by using the new song "Kentucky in His Veins" as the "official" song for Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program)
- \* Corporate sponsorships for specific program components.

**Task 1.1.4** Continue to monitor funding needs and opportunities. Identify and secure additional funds as needed.

**Action 1.2 Form an ongoing cultural heritage tourism steering committee by expanding the present steering committee to include additional organizations and individuals interested in implementing the strategic plan**

**Task 1.2.1** Expand the present steering committee to include additional organizations and individuals interested in implementing the strategic plan.

The new steering committee should include representatives from the Tourism Development Cabinet, the Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet, the Economic Development Cabinet and all their associated departments (with Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet adding Kentucky Educational



Television and the Tourism Development Cabinet adding the Department of Parks) as well as other appropriate organizations. Expanding the present steering committee to include such organizations as Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the Commodity Growers Association, Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Kentucky Small Business Development Center, Kentucky Arts and Crafts Foundation, the Kentucky Humanities Council, the Department of Education, a representative from the Craft College/Artisan Center, a representative from the Appalachian/Kentucky Gateway Artisans Center in Berea, Kentucky Department of Local Government, Kentucky Department of Transportation, the National Trust's Kentucky advisors and at least three grassroots representatives of cultural heritage tourism interests. Limiting the size of the committee to 25 persons will help in meeting management and group dynamics, while still offering a good base of individuals to be involved in carrying out the plan.

**Task 1.2.2** Elect a chairperson for the cultural heritage tourism steering committee, establish regular meeting times, and determine the plan of work for overseeing the strategic plan.

**Action 1.3    "Institutionalize" the position of Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator within the Department of Travel.**

**Task 1.3.1** Develop a retention strategy for the position of Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator. Due to the specialized nature of cultural heritage tourism and the amount of knowledge that a coordinator must have about local cultural heritage tourism attractions and available assistance programs, it will be essential to develop a retention strategy to enable the cabinets to attract and retain a qualified staff person for this position. The retention strategy will allow for ample professional development opportunities and build strong growth potential into the position.

In addition, as the program grows and the responsibilities of managing the grant programs expands, add support staff.

**Action 1.4    Form action teams to implement the specific recommendations of the strategic plan.**

Cultural heritage tourism action teams (modeled on the Economic Development Master Plan's Tactic Teams) will be responsible for implementing the specific recommendations in this strategic plan. Each action team will include at least one member of the steering committee to ensure good communication between the steering committee and the action

teams and will designate a chairperson. Each action team will include a representative from two of the three cabinets anchoring the steering committee (Tourism Development, Education, Arts and Humanities, and Economic Development) along with other individuals with appropriate skills and backgrounds. Each will meet on an as-needed, but regular, basis, and will create and implement an action plan for the portion of the plan for which they are responsible.

**Action 1.5 Reallocate existing resources to begin to implement the recommendations of this strategic plan.**

While the executive steering committee seeks new funding to fully implement this plan, the steering committee will begin to implement the plan by reallocating existing resources. The majority of the cost of the cultural heritage tourism program should be shared by the Tourism Development Cabinet, Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet and other relevant agencies, with each cabinet providing staffing and program support.

**Task 1.5.1** Support the passage of other legislative funding initiatives that will directly benefit cultural heritage tourism development in Kentucky, such as the proposed \$2 million increase in the State Restoration Grants Program which will provide new financial support to preserve historic structures and sites with tourism development potential.

**Action 1.6 Produce and disseminate collateral materials to promote and inform the Kentucky tourism industry of the new Cultural Heritage Tourism Program.**

As the program is getting established, an accompanying public relations effort will reinforce the message about the new program and will improve communications at the grassroots level about the intentions of the state. Some of the materials for distribution include a program fact sheet, definition and impact on cultural heritage tourism, proposed timeline for Kentucky cultural heritage tourism activities and instructions for participation and response.

**Action 1.7 Develop and establish cooperative field staffing arrangements for the cultural heritage tourism program to provide program support.**

Regional representation for cultural heritage tourism is essential, partly because of the state's large number of counties and the length of the state from west to east. Field staff will represent the state's geographic regions, diverse heritage, and the variety of disciplines that together

make up cultural heritage tourism to provide the broadest coverage possible.

**Task 1.7.1** Designated staff persons working in particular themes, such as coal heritage, Civil War Heritage, agricultural heritage, African American heritage, etc, might be staff of several agencies or other public or private organizations, such as libraries, but would take on the role of "clearinghouse" for information related to their topic. They would also be equipped to provide technical assistance to organizations working in these themes and would be charged with keeping abreast of trends, programs and activities, resources available, etc. for their topics. They would maintain close contact with the cultural heritage tourism coordinator and attend training and workshops related to their topics and to cultural heritage tourism.

**Task 1.7.2** Identify individuals in every region in Kentucky to serve as regional cultural heritage tourism field representatives. Field representatives will be expected to attend cultural heritage tourism train-the-trainer sessions, meet regularly with the cultural heritage tourism coordinator, provide information and training on the cultural heritage tourism program to their region and keep the coordinator informed of cultural heritage tourism activities within their region. Field representatives will represent the various disciplines that make up cultural heritage tourism, including tourism, preservation, the arts, museums, etc.

Some regions may have multiple field representatives to ensure that the program will have as broad a reach as possible.

**Task 1.7.3** Coordinate an annual cultural heritage tourism training workshop for all cultural heritage tourism field staff and any interested members of the steering committee. The training workshop will include current information and best practices in cultural heritage tourism as well as updates on the services and programs available at the state level in Kentucky. Participants will be provided with a comprehensive cultural heritage tourism resource binder containing information about the state's cultural heritage tourism program and information compiled as part of the cultural heritage tourism information clearinghouse.

**Task 1.7.4** Coordinate bi-monthly field staff meetings to exchange information between the state and the local level, and between regions.

**Task 1.7.5** Set up a peer advisory network for cultural heritage tourism similar to that in place by the Kentucky Arts Council, or expand the Arts Council's network to include resource professionals for cultural heritage tourism.

Often, needs at a local level can be met by professional individuals in the area, expanding the "staff" for cultural heritage tourism activities to the private sector as well. Recruiting a "roster" of highly experienced Kentucky-based cultural heritage tourism professionals and consultants available to organizations for low-cost delivery of technical assistance in long-range planning, budgeting, advocacy, diversity outreach, fundraising, publicity, and program planning would help meet some staffing needs and provide vital linkages to communities. As the program develops, the peer advisory network could include "mentors" from the more mature project areas.

**Action 1.8 Establish a mechanism for monitoring the overall program and the progress of the action teams on an on-going basis.**

The steering committee is charged with monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan. The Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator will be the ongoing liaison between steering committee, action teams and local project areas.

**Task 1.8.1** Complete an annual report summarizing the accomplishments of the cultural heritage tourism program to distribute to the steering committee and elected officials.

**Task 1.8.2** Update the KY Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan on an annual basis.

**Task 1.8.3** Integrate specific mechanisms in existing market research conducted by the Kentucky Department of Travel (and other state agencies, if appropriate) to monitor the economic and social impact of cultural heritage tourism to the state. This information can be distributed to media and promoted during National Tourism Week each May.

## **Goal 2—Establish a pro-active information network to encourage communication among state, regional, private agencies and individuals involved in cultural heritage tourism activities.**

Open communication lines between local initiatives and state agencies are essential to full impact of the Cultural Heritage Tourism Program efforts. Making information readily available, in a fashion that is accessible by even the most remote locations, will build support and enthusiasm for cultural heritage tourism.

### **Action 2.1 Compile a centralized cultural heritage tourism information clearinghouse.**

The clearinghouse should include information about cultural heritage tourism funding and technical assistance programs available at the state, regional and national level and how-to publications. The information should be easily accessed by public and private sector participants throughout Kentucky for use in developing, preserving and promoting cultural heritage tourism activities (see Action 2.3.1).

### **Action 2.2 Keep millennium forum participants well informed about the status of the strategic plan and state level programs.**

**Task 2.2.1** Compile a centralized mailing list of all millennium forum participants and make mailing list readily available to state agencies for their use and cross reference.

**Task 2.2.2** Mail a synopsis of the strategic plan to all millennium forum participants along with a copy of the publication *Getting Started: How to Succeed in Heritage Tourism* as a thank you for their participation. Include a cover letter that thanks participants for their input, lets them know where they can access a complete copy of the strategic plan, and alerts them that additional program information will be sent shortly.

### **Action 2.3 Use the expanded Kentucky Tourism web site, scheduled to be on-line in early 2000, as a way to exchange information between cultural heritage tourism professionals in Kentucky.** Create an on-line registration with a password secure access to limit access to appropriate users.

**Task 2.3.1** Include on the website the information compiled for the cultural heritage tourism information clearinghouse, a copy of the complete cultural heritage tourism strategic plan, a calendar listing workshops, conferences and classes; guidelines for grant and technical assistance programs including upcoming deadlines; and listings of contacts within the state

under a variety of thematic headings such as Civil War, Arts & Crafts, African American Heritage, Industrial Heritage and Famous Kentuckians.

**Task 2.3.2** Coordinate a ``bulletin board`` on the Kentucky Tourism web site to address current topics or developments in cultural heritage tourism. The bulletin board would also provide a Q&A forum for cultural heritage tourism issues.

**Action 2.4** Communicate regular cultural heritage tourism updates such as new initiatives, products, services, conferences, grants on an ongoing basis to targeted audiences, such as members of the public and private sector in Kentucky tourism, members of the Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism steering committee, tour operators and retail sellers of the Kentucky travel product.

**Task 2.4.1** Poll state agencies to determine format and publication date for communication vehicles (newsletters, fax broadcast announcements, e-mail updates) used to reach membership or mailing lists.

**Task 2.4.2** Negotiate inclusion of a ``column`` that covers Cultural Heritage Tourism Program ``happenings`` in communication vehicles already in existence within state agencies.

**Task 2.4.3** Create and disseminate quarterly calendar listing of cultural heritage tourism workshops and conferences available across the state to targeted mailing lists. Attendance at designated workshops in fields related to cultural heritage tourism (tourism, historic preservation, the arts, museums, etc.) will be taken into consideration as partnership areas apply for additional tourism development support from the state.

**Action 2.5** Ensure that cultural heritage tourism practitioners are aware of and have access to the Kentucky Tourism Development Resource Manual.

**Task 2.5.1** Encourage colleges, universities and others to develop historic and cultural tourism curriculum classes and list classes in the quarterly cultural heritage tourism calendar described in Action 3.4.

### **Goal 3—Create a community awareness campaign to encourage on-site learning about Kentucky heritage for residents of all ages.**

**Action 3.1 Tap Kentucky broadcasters to create “Millennium Milestones”—30 to 60 second PSAs to air as part of local broadcasts—to showcase great moments in history. Where possible, link “cultural months” with subject matter (for example, focus on African American milestones in February)**

**Action 3.2 Enhance the existing tourism awards program by adding one or more cultural heritage tourism awards to recognize “Top Cultural Heritage Tourism” categories such as event, attraction, regional itinerary, preservation effort, educational program, professional, etc.**

**Action 3.3 Establish a “When I was a Child” series to evoke favorite memories of Kentucky (launch with famous Kentuckians reminiscing about their childhood) through advertisements, a special photo book, and a postcard series.**

**Action 3.4 Host an annual “Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Week” each May. Elements will include:**

- a) a free “museum” day statewide for all Kentucky residents (show your driver’s license for admission)
- b) a speakers bureau formed to inform local and state legislators on the benefits – economic and social – of cultural heritage tourism.
- c) “What Kentucky Means to Me” visual essay contest – annual event to interpret the heart of Kentucky, building on the existing annual photo essay contest sponsored by the Kentucky Heritage Council and Preservation Kentucky. Have sponsorship with awards

**Action 3.5 Support the expansion of a cultural heritage signage program, using Frankfort’s program as a model, to serve as a wayfinding system for visitors. Consider a unified statewide logo system to identify resource types (such as downtowns, historic sites, scenic views, etc.). A consistent and attractive signage program will increase local awareness of cultural heritage resources.**

## **Goal 4—Encourage cultural heritage tourism product development through education and incentive programs that support the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage resources.**

The success of the Cultural Heritage Tourism Program will partly depend upon initiatives at the grassroots level that result in regional collaborations. In order to encourage and nurture the development of such local initiatives, a system of support will be created to provide incentives and assistance, from an entry level to a level involving substantial state investment.

**Action 4.1 Establish a three-level "Red White & Blue Ribbon" system of support and incentive packages for regional partnerships involved in cultural heritage tourism activities** (see description of Red White and Blue program in Appendix B). Prepare application materials for each of the three levels as program funding and support becomes available.

**Task 4.1.1** Expand and finalize participation criteria and design an appealing package of program benefits with corresponding responsibilities for program participation at each level. Develop and disseminate program and application materials.

**Task 4.1.2** Prepare and disseminate application materials for the first round of White and Red Ribbon areas.

**Task 4.1.3** Create "Resource Teams" to make field assessment visits to cultural heritage tourism areas.

Resource teams will visit areas hoping to move from the White to Red or Red to Blue Ribbon level as part of the decision making process. A Resource team might consist of one Tourism staff person, one Heritage Council staff person, one Arts Council staff person and one Economic Development staff person, though team make-up and size may vary depending upon local needs. The two-day assessment visits will consist of a tour of the area, interviews with key community leaders and a community presentation by the resource team. Each area will be provided with a brief, bulleted report outlining the key recommendations for the area following the visit.

A limited budget for regional and national consultants will be included to supplement the in-state expertise of the resource teams.

**Task 4.1.4** Prepare and disseminate application materials for the first round of Blue Ribbon areas.



**Action 4.2 Support the implementation of the Kentucky Product Development proposal being developed in response to Tactic 5.3.4 in the Economic Development Master Plan. Coordinate product development through a clearinghouse to maintain consistency, authenticity and cost control.**

The current product development proposal includes market research to better understand current and potential customers, product research to provide marketable Kentucky products at a variety of price points, support programs to encourage the development of new Kentucky-made products and the enhancement of existing retail outlets in state gift facilities and the expansion of the program to new venues such as the Appalachian/Kentucky Gateway Artisans Center in Berea and selected retail stores.

**Action 4.3 Create an "Executives-on-Loan" program for Blue Ribbon level projects to provide technical and managerial expertise for specific cultural heritage tourism activities** Executives on Loan could assist with capital campaigns, event creation/management, telecommunication, marketing, preservation, organizational development and special campaigns.

Modeled after the United Way program, this program will tap Kentucky companies and leadership organizations to provide personnel "on loan" for a designated period of time—traditionally six to eighteen months—to complete designated projects. The Steering Committee will work to identify a "menu" of projects that need high-profile assistance and specific staffing qualifications.

**Action 4.4 From the Blue-Ribbon participants, create a "Best of Kentucky Culture" tour itinerary (primarily for international audiences) showcasing the premier attraction or asset from each cultural heritage category: arts, crafts, music, industry, food, nature and politics.**

## **Goal 5 —Establish Kentucky’s cultural heritage tourism niche as the “kid-friendly” place to visit.**

Develop and promote statewide “kid-friendly” activities for every cultural heritage tourism attraction by improving products and services to attract and host kids of all ages to Kentucky’s cultural heritage tourism attractions.

As reported earlier, family vacations that include kids are on the rise. The recent *Better Homes & Gardens* study reports that “The number of family vacations that include children have increased by 55% since 1992, and the family market is booming.” According to Peter Mason, Director, Meredith Travel Marketing Group for Meredith Corporation (publishers of *Better Homes & Gardens* and other publications such as *Midwest Living*), “the next millennium is going to see an expanding era of kid-friendly attractions, services and destinations to cater to this surging phenomenon.” To attract this market, destinations and states across the country are creating new product and marketing their experiences to the family and student market. For instance, the state of Ohio has expanded its group tour marketing effort to target directly to Student/Youth travel; Brunswick and the Golden Isles of Georgia distribute a “family fun” brochure to visitors interested in the various cultural and recreational activities available for children. Hyatt Hotels offers a “kids camp” at many of its resort properties and several national newsletters are now published on new activities and destinations catering to children.

**Action 5.1 Establish an “Edutainment” Action Team to create and oversee a “Kentucky for Kids” Program.** Action team should include representatives from the Cabinet of Education, Arts, Humanities (including KET), Department of Libraries, Girl & Boy Scouts, and other agencies and associations with youth programs to provide expertise.

**Action 5.2 Design and distribute a “Kid-Friendly” Kentucky logo to identify those sites and services that offer specific “kid-friendly” programs and activities.**

As tourism becomes more competitive, a “seal of approval” designating that a site has met certain criteria is an instructional guide for the visitor and marketing tool for the state.

**Action 5.3 Conduct focus groups with “Kentucky Kids” (ages 6-18) in all regions of the state to understand the impressions and image of the Commonwealth.** Successful product launches depend on market information and feedback. By monitoring the desires and interests of the target market, Kentucky can anticipate trends and offer more attractive, innovative products. In addition, Kentucky will glean specific information on the best ways to reach this valuable customer and attract their (and their parents/grandparents) discretionary spending.

**Action 5.4 Select a group of students to “assess” current experiences at selected cultural heritage tourism sites statewide and recommend new programs and services to enhance the “kid/student” experience.**

**Action 5.5 Implement a dynamic Kentucky heritage education program at both the elementary and secondary school level.**

An informed resident, be it child or adult, becomes an informed traveler and ambassador for the state. A combination of field trips, learning exercises and interactive programs designed for beginners (first grade), intermediate (fourth grade) and advanced (ninth grade) will demonstrate the importance of Kentucky’s cultural heritage to today and tomorrow.

**Action 5.6 Based on market research, encourage the creation of new products and services to enhance the “kid-friendly” experience at cultural heritage attractions by offering a dedicated pool of matching grant funding specifically earmarked for this need.** Matching grant funds will be made available to qualified cultural heritage tourism areas at the Red or Blue Ribbon level.

**Action 5.7 Produce a weekly “Kentucky KID TV” program to showcase the interests, talents and events related to Kentucky children.** Enlist the support and sponsorship of the Kentucky Broadcasters Association to produce this program featuring kid anchors, kid reporters, kid features and kid field trips.

**Action 5.8 Create a “Kentucky Kids” travel guide with incentives/coupons for families and an activity or coloring book to entice families and student/youth travel groups to the Commonwealth.** Use market research and enhanced “kid-friendly” experiences to create materials.

**Action 5.9 Promote family and student tour group touring options through press releases to target media including Family Circle, Better Homes & Gardens, MTV, the Educated Traveler, History Channel, Traveling with Kids, etc.**

**Action 5.10 Solicit tour companies that specialize in youth/student travel to encourage inclusion of Kentucky itineraries: TOURCO, Student and Youth Travel Association of North America, etc.**

**Action 5.11 Attend Student and Youth Travel Association (SYTA) annual marketplace.**

**Action 5.12 Launch direct mail campaign highlighting “Youth Itineraries” or tour packages available in Kentucky for tour operators specializing in educational travel.**

## **Goal 6—Market authentic Kentucky cultural heritage tourism activities to an expanded cultural heritage audience**

**Action 6.1 Conduct market research with selected domestic and international audiences to understand visitor attitudes and perceptions about Kentucky’s cultural heritage and image.** Revisit key target cities over time to conduct focus groups regarding scope of knowledge and perceptions about Kentucky’s cultural heritage. Constantly monitor attitudes and opinions to market and deliver quality cultural heritage experiences.

**Action 6.2 Work with the Kentucky Department of Travel to broaden and enhance the current image of Kentucky to include Kentucky's rich cultural heritage attractions.** This added dimension to Kentucky's image will help the Commonwealth attract new cultural heritage tourism visitors and encourage existing visitors to lengthen their stay to visit cultural heritage tourism attractions.

**Task 6.2.1** Using market research, create a tag line that appropriately represents the diverse cultural heritage of the Commonwealth.

Nashville songwriter Alex Harvey wrote “Kentucky in His Veins” while in Hazard, Kentucky filming Stevan Segal’s 1997 movie, “Down Under.” The ballad, recently recorded by Wynona and Naomi Judd, is scheduled for inclusion on their new CD. The memorable lyrics serve as a great marketing opportunity for showcasing Kentucky’s distinctive cultural heritage. A collaborative promotion with the launch, song debut and association with two Kentucky natives could help raise awareness and funding for the continued development and marketing of the Kentucky Folkways Corridor (Highway 23).

**Task 6.2.2** Include special thematic itineraries in all Kentucky tourism publications. Distribute to tour operators and key travel companies.

**Task 6.2.3** Hyperlink cultural heritage tourism sites to the Kentucky’s tourism web page under a new “cultural heritage” attractions banner.

**Task 6.2.4** Develop new publications that showcase the major themes of Kentucky’s cultural heritage tourism product(s).

**Action 6.3 Increase print and broadcast media coverage (domestic and international) of Kentucky’s cultural heritage tourism products through effective public relations activities including media research trips, expanded story ideas showcasing the key cultural heritage tourism themes, interviews with cultural heritage tourism officials, etc.**

**Action 6.4 Expand the cultural heritage tour product in operator catalogues, showcase at travel trade shows and through the creation of themed tour itineraries**

**Task 6.4.1** Solicit tour operators and receptive tour operators to include Kentucky cultural heritage tour products (hotels, attractions, restaurants, events and activities) in their catalogues.

**Task 6.4.2** Showcase Kentucky's cultural heritage tour product at major travel shows through performances by Commonwealth musicians, demonstrations of artists and craftspeople, dramatizations and displays of original works.

**Task 6.4.3** Create a series of tour itineraries along significant cultural heritage touring themes such as Civil War, arts and crafts, coal heritage, etc.

**Task 6.4.4** Promote key cultural heritage tourism activities directly to consumers. In key target markets, identify opportunities to showcase authentic Kentucky cultural heritage product via special events, concerts, plays, tournaments, etc.

**Action 6.5 Enhance cultural heritage tourism messages through effective, targeted and frequent media placement.**

## **Appendix A**

### **Organizational Structure Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Program**

Kentucky's cultural heritage tourism program is a joint program of the Tourism Development Cabinet, the Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet and other partners. The lead staff person for the program will be the Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator, who will report to the Deputy Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Travel in the Tourism Development Cabinet. Additional field staffing and program assistance will be provided through the Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet and other applicable cabinets or agencies.

The deputy commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Travel will be responsible for hiring and supervising the cultural heritage tourism coordinator. Due to the specialized nature of cultural heritage tourism and the amount of knowledge that a coordinator must have about local cultural heritage tourism attractions and available assistance programs, it will be essential to develop a strong retention strategy to attract and retain a qualified staff person for this position. The retention strategy will allow for ample professional development opportunities and build growth potential into the position.

#### **1. Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator**

The Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator will carry the primary staff responsibility for the cultural heritage tourism program. The coordinator will work closely with the steering committee and the action teams assigned to implement specific actions in the strategic plan. The coordinator will also oversee the delivery of services to the designated project areas, and as the program expands, the coordinator will hire and supervise additional program staff. The coordinator will also play a lead role in coordinating the training of and communication between other shared cultural heritage tourism field staff from all three cabinets and other organizations.

The cultural heritage tourism coordinator will compile resources such as case studies, best practices, information about financial and technical assistance programs, a calendar of cultural heritage tourism educational workshops and classes. The coordinator will make that information readily available through the communication mechanisms outlined in this strategic plan, and the coordinator will be able to present information to local groups about assistance programs that are appropriate for their specific needs. If there is a strong need for an educational program and there is no other organization able to take on the coordination of that program, the coordinator may organize an educational workshop or class to meet that need.

The coordinator will be knowledgeable about cultural heritage tourism programs statewide through on-site meetings and will help to foster thematic and geographic cultural heritage tourism networks at the grassroots level. The coordinator will also stay abreast of national trends in cultural heritage tourism by following national cultural heritage tourism publications and

attending national conferences.

The coordinator will consult with the marketing staff at the Kentucky Department of Travel and other agencies involved in promoting cultural heritage activities and products to ensure appropriate and complementary messages and images are conveyed to meet the desired result. In addition, the coordinator will consult on development projects to encourage compliance with the National Trust principles of cultural heritage tourism and the implementation of the state's master plan to desired end results.

This staff person will be part of the Tourism Development Cabinet, although additional support for the overall cultural heritage tourism program will be provided by both Cabinets. This includes staff salary, overhead, and an annual program operating budget. The operating budget will be used for consultant fees and professional development, including providing cultural heritage tourism training programs for the program's field staff. The Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator will report to the Kentucky Department of Travel Deputy Commissioner.

## **2. Executive Steering Committee**

An executive steering committee, consisting of the Tourism Development Cabinet, Education Arts and Humanities Cabinet, Economic Development Cabinet, the Arts Council and the Heritage Council will be responsible for identifying and securing additional funding for the Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Program to supplement a reallocation of existing resources.

## **3. Steering Committee**

Oversight for the Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Program is provided by a steering committee consisting of the executive steering committee and other appropriate organizations. The size of the steering committee will be limited to no more than 25. The steering committee will also be responsible for updating the strategic plan annually so that it remains a current working document that addresses current trends as well as new opportunities and challenges. The steering committee, which will meet on a quarterly basis, will select areas to participate in the program and review all work completed by the cultural heritage tourism action teams. Members of the steering committee will be responsible for sharing pertinent information with other steering committee members as well as the broader cultural heritage tourism community in Kentucky via the communication mechanisms outlined later in this plan. The steering committee will also take primary responsibility for developing partnerships with bordering states and may be tapped to serve as part of a resource team to assess regional tourism projects.

Steering committee members will be asked to serve on one or more action teams to implement the strategic plan. Steering committee members may also be tapped to serve as part of a resource team to assess existing and potential regional tourism partnership projects participating in the program. The steering committee will also help to update the strategic plan on an annual basis.

#### **4. Action Teams**

Cultural heritage tourism action teams (modeled on the Economic Development Master Plan's Tactic Teams) will be assigned to implement the specific recommendations in this strategic plan.

Each action team will include at least one member of the steering committee to ensure good communication between the steering committee and the action team. Each action team will also include a representative from each cabinet along with other individuals with appropriate skills and backgrounds. Each action team will meet on an as-needed basis.

#### **5. Field Staff**

Field staff will be provided with training in cultural heritage tourism including in-depth updates on the services and funding available at the state level. They will share this information with individuals and organizations at the grassroots level in their region. Field staff will also be responsible for keeping the cultural heritage tourism coordinator informed about cultural heritage tourism activities and programs around the state. Field staff will be required to attend an annual cultural heritage tourism training session and attend bi-monthly field staff meetings organized by the cultural heritage tourism coordinator.

Field staff will be selected from existing program staff representing a variety of disciplines and geographic areas. Field staff will be asked to take on the cultural heritage tourism responsibilities described above in addition to existing job responsibilities.

#### **6. “Red White & Blue” Ribbon Program**

Regional cultural heritage tourism projects may participate in the Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Program through the Red White & Blue Ribbon program. This program will provide three tiers of support for grassroots partnership projects, starting with the entry, or White Ribbon level and culminating with the Blue Ribbon level. This program is designed to encourage initiative at the grassroots level by providing a strong benefits package as a “carrot”. This three-tiered structure is loosely modeled on the Renaissance Kentucky's gold, silver and bronze Main Street Program, although the Red White & Blue program will be geared specifically for regional cultural heritage tourism partnership projects.

The selection criteria for each level and the responsibilities and benefits for participating programs at each level will be developed and approved by the steering committee. Proposed draft program guidelines are included in Appendix B of this strategic plan.

#### **7. New Cultural Heritage Tourism Program Staff**

As additional grant funds are secured, funding will be built in to proposals to ensure that additional program staff can be hired at the state level. Program staff will ensure that state funding is used in the most effective way possible, and to oversee the delivery of technical



assistance to local areas. As a rule of thumb, the budget should include a project staffing line item equal to 20% of the project funding. The state program staff will work with local project coordinators to identify an appropriate scope of services, oversee the implementation of work funded by the state and ensure overall project quality control

## **Appendix B**

### **Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Program Eligibility Requirements (Draft)**

Participation in Kentucky's Cultural Heritage Tourism program is open to regional tourism partnership efforts in Kentucky where the primary focus is one or more aspects of Kentucky's culture or history. Regional partnerships must include a large enough geographic area to provide enough cultural heritage attractions to attract potential visitors. There are three levels of assistance for cultural heritage tourism partnerships through this program. The specific criteria for participation follows:

#### **WHITE RIBBON LEVEL**

The entry level, or "White Ribbon" level, will be open to all cultural heritage tourism partnership efforts in Kentucky meeting the basic criteria outlined below. Cultural heritage tourism attractions are defined as the "places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present, including cultural, historic and natural resources." At this level, cultural heritage tourism areas can access a centralized clearinghouse of information about existing tourism development and marketing resources. Partnership areas participating at this level will also learn more about the requirements and benefits of participating in the program at a higher level.

#### ***Participation Criteria***

##### **1. Defining the cultural heritage tourism project**

Describe the measurable results the regional partnership hopes to accomplish in cultural heritage tourism and how those results will be achieved.

##### **2. Defining the boundaries of the project area**

Eligible programs must define and provide a justification for the boundaries of their tourism region. Boundaries should encompass an area that makes sense from the perspective of a potential visitor. In other words, boundaries should include the cultural heritage resources that provide the most meaningful, complete and accessible experience for the visitor. The project area should include a critical mass of cultural heritage attractions and visitor services that fit within the defined cultural heritage tourism theme and meet the travel needs of the cultural heritage visitor. Thematic linkages or geographic features should be used to justify boundaries rather than existing political boundaries of city, county or state lines.

##### **4. Project Partners**

Eligible tourism areas must have a diverse group of project partners who have been working or who are willing to work together collaboratively. Partners must represent the diverse disciplines

of cultural heritage tourism including areas such as tourism, historic preservation, the arts, main street programs, cooperative extension programs, historical societies, conservation districts, museums, chambers of commerce, elected officials, business leaders, public libraries, colleges & universities and other interested citizens.

All partners must provide a letter of commitment that outlines the role that they intend to play in the project as well as a commitment to the Five Principles of Heritage Tourism.

#### **4. Leadership**

The project partners must agree upon a lead organization or individual who will serve as the primary project contact at the state level.

#### ***Benefits***

1. Access to a centralized information clearinghouse about cultural heritage tourism development, preservation and marketing resources available in Kentucky. This includes a centralized listing of grants and technical assistance programs, how-to publications, and a calendar of educational opportunities for cultural heritage tourism development and marketing.
2. In addition to existing grant programs, \$50,000/year in new funding will be sought for a competitive matching grant program for heritage education grants to improve the “kid -friendly” factor at cultural heritage sites.

#### **RED RIBBON LEVEL**

The middle level of tourism development and marketing assistance for Kentucky’s cultural heritage tourism partnership areas is the “Red Ribbon” level.

#### ***Participation Criteria***

##### **1. Must meet all White Ribbon level criteria**

##### **2. Mission, Goals & Objectives**

The area must have developed and agreed upon a mission (a brief statement of purpose), goals (what the area hopes to accomplish and the issues the area plans to address), and objectives (the specific strategies the area intends to use to accomplish the area’s goals). A statement listing the mission, goals and objectives must be submitted to the Kentucky Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator along with letters of support from all partners that indicate the role and responsibilities of each partner.

##### **3. Attend Cultural Heritage Tourism Workshops and Classes**

A calendar of events will be created that lists workshops and classes that provide educational

opportunities in some aspect of cultural heritage tourism. These workshops and classes will include programs in historic preservation, community planning, tourism, economic development, the arts, and other related fields. Attending cultural heritage tourism educational programs will be taken into consideration by the steering committee in reviewing applications for tourism development assistance.

#### **4. Resource Team Visit**

Host a two-day Resource Team visit which will include a tour of the area, meetings and interviews with key project leaders and a public community meeting. Resource teams will consist of a multi-disciplinary team of experts at the state and/or national level available to make an on-site visit to assess existing and potential heritage tourism assets. The resource team assessments will be based on the five principles of heritage tourism. Following the visit, the resource team will provide a bulleted list of recommendations. This list will include specific recommendations that must be implemented before the area can be considered for the Blue Ribbon level as well as general recommendations based on the team's expertise.

#### ***Benefits***

1. All benefits for White Ribbon level.
2. Limited priority status or bonus points for some grants and technical assistance (to be defined by the steering committee).
3. Limited priority status for existing technical assistance programs at the state level (to be defined by the steering committee).
4. Ability to have apply for state resource team visit to complete an assessment of the area and provide written recommendations for enhancement.
5. Ability to apply for funding from a new \$100,000/year matching grant pool. Preference will be given to applications to create a regional cultural heritage tourism plan, and the completion of such a plan will be a prerequisite for the Blue Ribbon level.
6. Assistance in exploring the area's potential as a nationally designated heritage area. This political designation has the potential to attract additional federal dollars beyond those available at the state level. (Note: The Kentucky Heritage Council currently has funding set aside to offer heritage area workshops in locations around the state).
7. Other potential benefits might include invitations to participate in special co-op advertising promotions and inclusion in special marketing promotions that are targeted to increase cultural heritage tourism overnights.

## **BLUE RIBBON LEVEL**

The “Blue Ribbon” level will be the highest designation for cultural heritage tourism partnership projects. The number of Blue Ribbon areas participating in the program at one time will vary based upon the number of qualified applicants and the available funding. Selection as a Blue Ribbon area will be highly competitive, and the selection will be made by the steering committee. The steering committee will consider both the long term potential of the area as a tourism destination as well as the level of local commitment to the project.

### ***Participation Criteria***

#### **1. Must meet all White and Red Ribbon level criteria.**

#### **2. Asset Inventory**

The area must have a written inventory of the area’s assets, including historic, cultural and natural resources and visitor services including lodging, restaurants, shops, and tourism infrastructure (transportation access, signage, information centers, public rest rooms, service stations, etc.). This may be included as part of the tourism management plan for the area.

#### **3. Regional Cultural Heritage Tourism Plan**

Using the Five Principles of Heritage Tourism as guidelines, Blue Ribbon areas must have completed a written regional cultural heritage tourism plan before being designated as a Blue Ribbon area. This plan must include includes goals, an action plan which includes an assignment of responsibility, budget needs and potential sources for funding, and a time line for completion prior to being selected as a Blue Ribbon area. The plan must include a regional management plan which addresses the interpretation of cultural heritage resources, historic preservation, conservation of natural resources, regional planning and zoning, tourism infrastructure and marketing. The plan will identify priority projects for the area and will indicate how the Blue Ribbon level funding will be used to accomplish goals.

#### **4. Staff**

The area must have a staff person dedicated to implementing the master plan and coordinating the efforts of the partners. This may be someone who also has another job description such as the director of a museum, CVB or main street program as long as staffing the regional cultural heritage tourism effort is included in their job description

#### **5. Financial Resources**

The area must have the financial resources to provide the necessary match for the state funds that accompany assistance at the Blue Ribbon level. Additionally, the area must show an ability to secure additional funds on an as-needed basis and demonstrate how the investment of funds will

provide a sustainable economic impact for the region.

#### **6. Measurement of Results**

The area must collect baseline data and identify specific measurement strategies that will be used to track the impact of the project. This information will be provided to the cultural heritage tourism coordinator for inclusion in the cultural heritage tourism annual report.

#### **7. Significance**

The area must represent significant cultural heritage tourism themes in Kentucky.

#### **8. Visitor Appeal**

The area must offer attractions and experiences that will appeal to identified target markets.

#### **9. Geographic Diversity**

Blue Ribbon areas will be chosen to represent the diverse regions of Kentucky.

#### ***Benefits***

The number of Blue Ribbon level areas will be determined by the amount of funding available for the program. Benefits will include:

1. All benefits at the White and Red Ribbon levels
2. Special recognition on state tourism promotional and collateral materials
3. Bonus points or priority status for other existing grant programs (to be determined by the steering committee)
4. Priority status to receive technical assistance from state programs (to be determined by the steering committee)
5. Ability to tap into the “Executives on Loan” program
6. A new, dedicated source of tourism development funding consisting of \$50,000 per year for each Blue Ribbon area for up to five years, contingent upon the availability of funding. A 20% local cash match (\$10,000/year) will be required of each project area.

Note: Requests will be made for \$250,000/year to allow five areas to participate in the Blue Ribbon program at one time. This project funding will be used to provide a scope of services targeted to meet the needs of each individual area to maximize their potential. A project coordinator at the state level will work with local leaders to develop an appropriate scope of services based upon the tourism management plan for the area and assist the local area in implementation.

